

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 059953

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 59953 ACTION GUATEMALA INFO BELIZE
LONDON USCINCSO MAR 26TH

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 059953

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BH, GU, UK

SUBJECT: CHANGE IN BELIZE CONSTITUTION

REF: (A) GAWF-LIPPE LETTER MARCH 19 (NOTAL); (B) BELIZE

176

1. BELIZE GAZETTE FEBRUARY 23 PUBLISHED AMENDMENT TO
LETTERS PATENT (CONSTITUTION) GOVERNING RELATIONSHIP
THAT COLONY TO UK. ARTICLE 15 WAS AMENDED BY ADDITION
OF A SECOND PARAGRAPH TO PERMIT BRITISH GOVERNOR
TO DELEGATE "WITH THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE SECRETARY
OF STATE, TO A MINISTER DESIGNATED BY HIM AFTER CONSUL-
TATION WITH THE PREMIER SUCH RESPONSIBILITY FOR MATTERS
RELATING TO EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AS THE GOVERNOR MAY THINK
FIT UPON SUCH CONDITIONS AS HE MAY IMPOSE."

2. BRITISH EMBASSY TOLD DEPARTMENT IT UNDERSTOOD THAT
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AMENDMENT MERELY CODIFIED PREVIOUS PRACTICE (AS FOR

EXAMPLE WHEN MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE SIGNED FOOT AND MOUTH AGREEMENT WITH US WITH APPROVAL OF GOVERNOR)AND THAT THERE WAS NO INTENTION OF APPOINTING A FOREIGN MINISTER OR AS "THE REPORTER" CHARGES, GIVING THAT PORTFOLIO TO PRICE. BRITISH FURTHER NOTED THAT LETTERS PATENT IN ARTICLE 15 PARA. 1 CONTINUE TO VEST RESPONSIBILITY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, DEFENSE, INTERNAL SECURITY AND THE CIVIL SERVICE IN THE GOVERNOR.

PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT ACCORDING TO BRITISH HERE WAS TO PERMIT BELIZEAN RATHER THAN THE BRITISH COLONIAL GOVERNOR TO SIGN ACCESSION TO CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY, AND THAT CHANGE WAS MADE IN LETTERS PATENT OF CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATED STATES FOR SIMILAR REASON.

3. WE HAVE ASKED BRITISH EMBASSY TO CONFIRM WITH LONDON THE INTERPRETATION PROVIDED US, SINCE IT APPEARS THAT FOLLOWING PREVIOUS PRACTICE THE GOVERNOR COULD HAVE DESIGNATED A BELIZEAN TO SIGN THE ACCESSION AGREEMENT WITHOUT THE AMENDMENT.

4. AT THE SAME TIME WE URGED THE BRITISH TO BE AWARE OF GUATEMALA'S TRADITIONALLY SHARP REACTION TO CHANGES AFFECTING BELIZEAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE AND GUATEMALA'S CURRENTLY UNSETTLED INTERNAL SITUATION. WE SUGGESTED THEY KEEP WEYNES INFORMED SO HE WILL BE PREPARED TO CLARIFY POSSIBLE MISINTERPRETATION BY THE GUATEMALANS.
RUSH UNQUOTE RUSH

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